

“Believe in yourself. You are braver than you think, more talented than you know, and capable of more than you imagine.” Roy T. Bennett

INTERNATIONAL

PRESIDENT OF INDIA BECOMES FIRST VISITING HEAD OF TO SWAZILAND

President of India becomes first visiting Head of State to address Parliament of **Swaziland**.

India commits to cooperation in Health and Agriculture, to build new Parliament building.

He announced that India would facilitate establishing a Centre of Agricultural Excellence in Swaziland.

He also said that India would develop an irrigation system in the Lubuyane region.



GOVT. IMPOSED AN ANTI-DUMPING DUTY ON THE IMPORT OF PHOSPHORUS PENTOXIDE

The revenue department has imposed an anti-dumping duty on the import of a chemical from China to protect the domestic manufacturers from cheap shipments.

Phosphorus Pentoxide is used as a powerful desiccant and dehydrating agent and is a useful building block and reagent in the chemical industry.

DGAD:

The Directorate General of Anti-Dumping and Allied Duties (DGAD) had carried out a probe into the imports of the chemical to ascertain if the shipments were causing injury to the domestic manufacturers of the chemical.

After the investigation, the DGAD concluded that the chemical was being exported to India below the normal value and that domestic

industry suffered a material injury on account of dumped imports.

Based on the recommendation of the DGAD, the revenue department imposed the levy on the import of the chemical from China.

NATIONAL

NITI FORUM FOR NORTH EAST

The first meeting of newly constituted NITI Forum for North East was recently held in Agartala, Tripura. The meeting was chaired by the Vice-Chairman, NITI Aayog.

Strategies for improving Road, Rail and Air Connectivity in the North East Region, improvements in agriculture and allied sectors, water management were some of the key focus area during the meeting.

NITI Forum for Northeast:

The Union Government set up the ‘**NITI Forum for North-East**’ in February 2018.

The forum will be **co-chaired by the Vice-Chairman of NITI Aayog and Minister of State (I/C), Ministry of Development of Northeastern Region (DoNER)**.

The forum will have its Secretariat in the Ministry of DoNER.

The NITI Forum for Northeast is tasked to identify various constraints on the way of accelerated, inclusive and sustainable economic growth in the North East Region of the country and to recommend suitable interventions for addressing identified constraints. It will also review the development status in the NER.

The Forum includes representation from all NE States, their Chief Secretaries and Secretaries of relevant Central Ministries/Departments, Directors of reputed institutions (IIT, IIM etc), experts and journalists have been included as members.

UNION HEALTH MINISTRY BANNED SALE OF 14 PRODUCTS

The Union Health Ministry has banned over-the-counter sale of 14 products.

The step is taken to prevent the indiscriminate sale of ointments containing steroids and antibiotics without prescription.

The decision was taken under the Schedule H of the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945.

The Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945 are the set of rules under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 which contains provisions for classification of drugs under given schedules and there are guidelines for the storage, sale, display and prescription of each schedule.

The decision was taken following consultation with the Drugs Technical Advisory Board.

The board has also submitted their recommendations to the Central Drugs Standards Control Organization.

The move comes after dermatologists complained that pharmaceutical companies were selling steroid-based creams to patients, who use them without medical guidance.

Some ointments that have been banned are alclometasone, beclomethasone, desonide and fluocinonide among others.

Schedule H drugs:

Schedule H is a class of prescription drugs in India appearing as an appendix to the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945 introduced in 1945.

These are drugs which cannot be purchased over the counter without the prescription of a qualified doctor.

The manufacture and sale of all drugs are covered under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act and Rules.

It is revised at times based on the advice of the Drugs Technical Advisory Board, part of the Central Drugs Standard Control Organization in the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

However, enforcement of Schedule H laws in India is lax, compared to the more restrictive Schedule X, for which a mandatory documentation trail must be maintained.

11 PUBLIC SECTOR BANKS BROUGHT UNDER PROMPT CORRECTIVE ACTION (PCA)

Eleven public sector banks have been brought under the central bank's Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) framework with an aim to check NPAs. This comes months after the central government had allocated capital of Rs 52,311 crore to 11 "weak banks" to maintain their minimum capital requirement.

PCA norms allow the regulator to place certain restrictions such as halting branch expansion and stopping dividend payment. It can even cap a bank's lending limit to one entity or sector. Other corrective actions that can be imposed on banks include special audit, restructuring operations and activation of recovery plan. Bank's promoters can be asked to bring in new management, too. The RBI can also supersede the bank's board, under PCA.

The PCA is invoked when certain risk thresholds are breached. There are three risk thresholds which are based on certain levels of asset quality, profitability, capital and the like. The third such threshold, which is maximum tolerance limit, sets net NPA at over 12% and negative return on assets for four consecutive years.

There are two types of restrictions, mandatory and discretionary. Restrictions on dividend, branch expansion, director's compensation, are mandatory while discretionary restrictions could include curbs on lending and deposit. In the cases of two banks where PCA was invoked after the revised guidelines were issued IDBI Bank and UCO Bank only mandatory restrictions were imposed. Both the banks breached risk threshold.

Banks are not allowed to renew or access costly deposits or take steps to increase their fee-based income. Banks will also have to launch a special drive to reduce the stock of NPAs and contain generation of fresh NPAs. They will also not be allowed to enter into new lines of business. RBI will also impose restrictions on the bank on borrowings from interbank market.

Impact:

Small and medium enterprises will have to bear the brunt due to this move by RBI. Since

the PCA framework restricts the amount of loans banks can extend, this will definitely put pressure on credit being made available to companies especially the MSMEs. Large companies have access to the corporate bond market so they may not be impacted immediately. It has been predicted that if more state-owned banks are brought under PCA, it will impact the credit availability for the MSME segment.

WORLD'S FIRST MICROFACTORY TO HELP TACKLE E-WASTE HAZARD CAME UP IN AUSTRALIA

An Indian-origin scientist in Australia has launched the world's first micro factory that can transform the components from electronic waste items such as smart phones and laptops into valuable materials for re-use.

A micro factory is one or a series of small machines and devices that uses patented technology to perform one or more functions in the reforming of waste products into new and usable resources. The e-waste micro factory that reforms discarded computers, mobile phones and printers has a number of small modules for this process and fits into a small site.

The e-waste micro factory has the potential to reduce the rapidly growing problem of vast amounts of electronic waste causing environmental harm and going into landfill. It can also turn many types of consumer waste such as glass, plastic and timber into commercial materials and products.

DGCA NOD FOR SEAPLANE FLIGHTS

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation is preparing rules for permitting the service and the norms would be ready in 45 days

A DGCA committee has observed that single-engine seaplanes can be used to operate commercial services feasibly subject to certain conditions

An operator of such a service would have to ensure that the seaplane's route includes an airport located at a distance within the aircraft's gliding range so that in case of an engine failure the plane could glide to safety

Private sector is seriously considering seaplane services for Indian Market.

Low-cost carrier SpiceJet had last year announced plans to purchase more than 100 amphibian planes at an estimated cost of \$400 million And entered into an agreement with Japan's Setouchi Holdings to explore the opportunity of bringing seaplane services back to India.

Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA):

The DGCA is the Indian governmental regulatory body for civil aviation under the Ministry of Civil Aviation. This directorate investigates aviation accidents and incidents.

It is headquartered in New Delhi.

The Government of India is planning to replace the organization with a Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), modelled on the lines of the American Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

WALMIKI AND MALHAR, TWO NEW LANGUAGES DISCOVERED

The Union Government has been making efforts to document the endangered tribal and minor languages. There are several languages unknown to the world and waiting to be discovered and documented. India is also considered a linguists Paradise and termed a sociolinguistic giant.

The languages are categorized "endangered" as the number of people speaking is small. These languages are spoken in Andhra Pradesh and Odisha. Only a few people living in the forest and hilly areas speak these languages.

Walmiki is spoken in Koraput of Odisha and on the bordering districts of Andhra Pradesh. Walmiki is an isolate language i.e. it does not belong to a family of languages. The name of the language is also interesting and indicative because the speech community claims descent from the great Indian saint-poet Valmiki.

Malhar is spoken in a remote and isolated hamlet which is almost 165 km from Bhubaneswar. The community consists of about 75 speakers including children. It

belongs to the North Dravidian subgroup of the Dravidian family of languages and has close affinities with the other North Dravidian languages like Malto and Kurux spoken in West Bengal, Jharkhand and Bihar.

SCIENCE AND TECH

NASA'S PARKER SOLAR PROBE SCHEDULED FOR JULY

NASA's Parker Solar Probe humanity's first mission to the Sun is undergoing final preparations for its launch scheduled for July 31.

After launch, it will orbit directly through the solar atmosphere the corona closer to the surface than any human-made object has ever gone.

The mission will reveal the fundamental science behind what drives the solar wind, the constant outpouring of material from the Sun that shapes planetary atmospheres and affects space weather near Earth

Its data will also be useful in improving forecasts of major eruptions on the Sun and the subsequent space weather events that impact technology on Earth, as well as satellites and astronauts in space

Parker Solar Probe:

Parker Solar Probe is a planned NASA robotic spacecraft to probe the outer corona of the Sun.

Objectives:

Trace the flow of energy that heats and accelerates the solar corona and solar wind.

Determine the structure and dynamics of the plasma and magnetic fields at the sources of the solar wind.

Explore mechanisms that accelerate and transport energetic particles.

It will approach to within 8.86 solar radii (6.2 million kilometers or 3.85 million miles) from the 'surface' (photosphere) of the Sun.

It will determine the structure and dynamics of the Sun's coronal magnetic field, understand how the solar corona and wind

are heated and accelerated, and determine what processes accelerate energetic particles.

The Parker Solar Probe mission design uses repeated gravity assists at Venus to incrementally decrease its orbital perihelion to achieve multiple passes of the Sun at approximately 8.5 solar radii.

The mission is important as the sun is the only star we can study up close. By studying this star we live with, we learn more about stars throughout the universe.

The sun is a source of light and heat for life on Earth. The more we know about it, the more we can understand how life on Earth developed.

The sun also affects Earth in less familiar ways. It is the source of the solar wind; a flow of ionized gases from the sun that streams past Earth at speeds of more than 500 km per second (a million miles per hour).

Disturbances in the solar wind shake Earth's magnetic field and pump energy into the radiation belts, part of a set of changes in near-Earth space known as space weather.

Space weather can change the orbits of satellites, shorten their lifetimes, or interfere with onboard electronics. The more we learn about what causes space weather – and how to predict it – the more we can protect the satellites we depend on.
